

## THE PRESENT CONDITION OF INDIA

yet more or less unexplored. It is not Utopian to envisage the day when villages not only have electric light, but carry on their local industries with power at a cheap rate. Russia has already seen the importance of power for agriculture. For the production of cheap manures, for effective irrigation, for all manner of industries power is essential.

As to village industries, this is a cause most dear to the heart of Mahatma Gandhi. The *khadi* movement is now established and Congress governments even consider protecting it. Other industries, such as the preparation of *gur* (raw sugar) and oil-pressing, are being developed by the Village Industries Association, but the whole movement tends to be prejudiced against mechanical methods and large-scale production. For many it seems to be a return to a bygone age. But it is difficult to ascertain how far it represents a maximum or a minimum programme. Is it an emphasis on what is now possible with the hope that when India is free a planned economy might be set in motion, whereby decentralised industries might be carried on in the villages while a few great factories conducted certain necessary processes in the great cities? There might be much to be said for this. One sympathises with the Ghandi-men's prejudice against the colossal leviathans of Europe. Such a monstrous aggregate of humanity as London has become cannot be justified, and it is proving itself a very dangerous weakness in an era of air-warfare. At the same time, when the Gandhi-men think that the elaborate processes of modern industry could be divided so that parts of a motor-car might be made in innumerable small factories (this was actually suggested to the writer by one of them), they clearly fail to realise the complex nature of modern industrial technique and the problems of expensive transport.

On the other hand, there is a trend in Gandhi's thought which is thoroughly inimical to modern mass-production